

From Taipei to the United States

Chinese newspapers flourish, fortifying belief in peace

By Newton H. Fulbright

Almost anywhere a traveler might choose to halt in a journey around the world he is likely to find a Chinese businessman earning a living at some trade for himself and family. And anywhere you find a Chinese businessman you are likely to find a growing Chinese community with its own newspaper.

Chinese-language newspapers are flourishing. Business is good. Some publishers are printing advertising for the overset.

From Taipei to New York there are 160 Chinese-language papers with a combined circulation of over 3 million. They adhere politically to the Free China government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and espouse a philosophy of freedom and enterprise which their editors claim is the ancient attribute of Chinese character.

In New York, in the Chinese community on the Lower East Side known as China Town, there are four Chinese-language newspapers with a combined daily circulation of over 40,000. In addition, there is a fifth of small circulation that publishes twice weekly and supports the communism of Mao Tse-tung. Not many Chinese-language newspapers outside mainland China do.

Aside from the four in New York, there are three "free" Chinese-language daily newspapers in San Francisco, one in Los Angeles, one in Chicago and two in Hawaii.

An educational visit

An E&P reporter, on a recent evening, met with Chinese publishers and editors to learn these things and more about Chinese-language newspapers. Getting out a Chinese-language newspaper is a business all its own. The Chinese use some of the same machinery an American publisher uses—but not as much of it. No linecasting machines for instance. The Chinese language eliminates this need.

The occasion was an informal dinner at the Pagoda Restaurant, to honor Wang Tih-wu, publisher of the *United Daily News* of Taipei. Founded 18 years ago and now with a circulation of 255,000, it is the

largest newspaper on Taiwan (Formosa). It uses Automation in production and planes to fly its editions to subscribers. It started with 110 employees and now has more than 1,000. Push-button operations have required more people with better skills.

"We keep trying to improve ourselves," said Wang. "We never quit trying."

He was here, stopping over on a world tour, to urge the publishers and editors of Chinese-language newspapers to come to Taipei next November 5 for the second annual conference of the World Chinese-Language Newspaper Association. The first was held last year at Hong Kong, sponsored by Miss Aw Sian, publisher of the Hong Kong *Tiger-Standard* and other Chinese-language newspapers in the British Crown Colony.

Strengthening culture

"This year," Wang said, "we hope to have representatives from all the Free World Chinese newspapers. We want to create a closer cultural union. Mr. Lee here, publisher of the *Chinese Journal*, is an American citizen. We don't want to steal his United States loyalty but we wish to fortify him and other Chinese publishers in their Chinese culture."

"We wish to do this," he said, "because it means quality in the individual, the striving on the part of the individual to become a better man—the obligation to do so. The essence of Chinese culture is living at peace with other people. We believe the world—especially the Communist world—could use some of this."

A Chinese dinner starts (at least this one did) with chopsticks for the Chinese and knife, fork and spoons for the lone occidental. It began with a bite of fried oyster and a slice of a boiled 100-year old egg, and went on to birdnest soup. It ended with a drink of warm milk mixed with fruit juice. Americans wouldn't like it. But the Chinese didn't care much for the sweet and sour dishes and the last course be-

fore the warm milk was a spoon full of pork and rice. The charm of a Chinese dinner is the art of tasting food. Nobody gorges himself on any one dish, and after tasting from about 12 dishes one feels pleasantly refreshed.

The talk, with glasses lifted repeatedly and toasts all around, was about New York's Chinese community and Chinese newspaper.

Changes in China Town

Four years ago, when this reporter was working for the *Herald Tribune*, the older Chinese took a dim view of the future of China Town. The young ones were moving out, going to college, becoming scientists and businessmen—moving to the suburbs. Edward Hong, the Chinese attorney, and other China Town residents could see the end of the Chinese community. Just the old folks left.

"All that has changed," said S. K. Chin, publisher of the *China Times*. "Within the past two years China Town has changed entirely. There is new life here. China Town is bigger and busier than ever."

"This is because of the 1965 immigration law changes," said I-cheng Loh, director of information for the Republic of China in its New York City bureau.

"For a long time, until two years ago, Loh said, "there were only a few Chinese admitted. Now there are 1,000 a year, and they all head for New York or San Francisco—most of them for New York's China Town."

As a result, Chinese newspapers and movies are doing a thriving business.

"They like to see a movie in Chinese," said Chin, who owns a motion picture theater. "They want Chinese movies and Chinese newspapers."

The movies are made on Taiwan and a Chinese news service, using the latest speedy facilities, transmits news about the two Chinas to the language newspapers.

Chin added that real estate in China Town, most of it owned by the Chinese through family associations, has increased in



Wang Tih-wu, publisher of the United Daily News of Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

value until it rivals mid-town real estate in price.

"This is an old section of town," he said. "These are old buildings. But the Chinese want their own community, and they are willing to pay for living here. We look after our problems. You know, until recently, there was no crime here — no juvenile problem. But with new people coming in, driven from China and without proper family control over the young, we are having a little trouble. But it is not much, and we still take care of our people."

Ancient press in use

After dinner there was a visit to Lee's newspaper, the *Chinese Journal*, over on East Broadway, across Chatham Square. Lee stood outside, looking up at the three-story building.

"I started working for this paper over on Canal Street," he said, "23 years ago. Now I own it, and I own this building here."

The composing room of a Chinese newspaper is not very large because there is not much machinery. In this one there was no stereotype equipment. There were only slanted trays of type, row on row, and frames on tables, between the rows.

"We have some 6,000 Chinese characters on our racks here," said Lee. "Our typesetters know just where to reach"

Asked about the absence of typesetting machines, Wang said no Chinese paper used them, not even in his modern plant in Taipei.

"Chinese characters are all square," he said. "Chinese words are all the same length. A line always comes out even at both ends."

"No justification needed," said Loh.

At one end of the room was an old-fashioned press, which

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eliminated the need for stereotypers. The press looked older than anything viewed outside a museum, but it was printing papers as clean as offset.

"I bet the Goss people don't even know this model is still in use," said Loh.

We tried to find the maker's plate to discover when the model was made.

"I don't know how old it is," said Lee, "but it gives good service. We never have any trouble with it."

Never a strike

Lee had a staff of four editors and two reporters. There were 22 people in the mechanical departments, including typesetters and pressmen.

"I've never had a strike," Lee said. "I have no union here."

Wang said some of his people at Taipei belonged to a union, but he had never had a strike. The United Daily News is printed on a Chinese-made 12-unit rotary press, he said. But it needs a larger one. He has moved the newspaper three times, he said, and needs still larger quarters.

One is struck by the thought that the Chinese language is a marvelous medium for getting things said in print. The Chinese publishers, we were told, get 20,000 words on a page. Newspapers on Taiwan run to 19 columns, but the local China Town papers have only eight columns.

"On Taiwan, by using a smaller typeface," Wang said, "we can get as many as 21 columns to a page for classified ads."

"Even then," he added, "we don't always have room for the advertising. A lot of classified and even some display is cast aside, in the overset. Ours is the only newspaper industry I know of where we are continually printing advertising for the overset."

In modernizing his plant and keeping up with developments in the printing industry, Wang said, "we have never fired a man. What we do is take the old men and teach them how to use the new machinery. This, I believe, has saved us from labor trouble. We feel our men are loyal to the paper and we try to make it so we can use them and still have their loyalty and help."

Wang, looking at Lee's old press with the bright, crisp, clean newspapers coming off the folder, smiled. All the way around the world, he said, he had found Chinese printing news-

papers on all sorts of machinery.

"Almost anywhere you go," he said, "you'll find a Chinese restaurant. And you are likely to find a Chinese newspaper. The Chinese love to read about the news from China and things they know. It makes you feel good to get around and find so many Chinese-language newspapers."

Loh, who arranged for the dinner and the tour of Lee's newspaper, had a distinguished career in journalism before joining the Chinese Information Service.

Before Mao and his group took over in China, Loh was a correspondent for the *Ta Kung Pao* of Nanking, and later, on Taiwan, was city editor of the English-language newspaper, the *China News*, and then managing editor of the *Taipei Daily News*. In 1955 he attended the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

"I know more about the newspaper business than anything else," Loh said. "That was my first love. In fact, I'm still faithful to it."